

Halo: ODST Private Calum Showpire

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Summary: Follow Private Showpire and his squad from the 677th Marine core ODST's based aboard the UNSC frigate The Lady Justice as they are dropped into the enemy held city of Downmarket.

1. Deployment

Halo: ODST Private Calum Showpire

_677_th_ Marine core ODST's based on UNSC frigate The Lady Justice.
Six man squad_

Squad leader Master Sergeant Leo Grover

Corporal Walter 'Walt' Goldwin

Private first class Calum Showpire

Private Greg Tetson

Private Li 'Li' Pyandao

Private Obadiah 'Obi' Shamal

Prologue**;**

Incoming ONI mission Statementâ€| Covenant forces have invaded planet Osiris and occupied the city of Downmarketâ€| UNSC frigate The Lady Justice cleared to deploy ODST unit at given coordinatesâ€| The Lady Justice then to set down main forces to the north of Downmarket to begin counter offensive to retake Downmarketâ€|

Mission statement to ODST squad leader.

Priority 1: Assess civilian casualties to local population and assist surviving population in all areas.

Priority 2: Report, through central city terminals, current Covenant strength and/or any information that may assist counter attack.

Priority 3: Weaken (eradicate if possible) any Covenant forces within the city of Downmarket to assist counter attack.

Priority 4: Find any and all information regarding the Covenant's continued presence in Downmarket.

End mission statementâ€|

Chapter 1:** Deployment.**

The squad leader's deep voice burst out over the ODST intercom "Feet first into hell!" The traditional battle cry of the ODST's which was repeated by the other five members of the squad before all deployments. Private First Class Calum Showpire gave his battle cry and grinned a wide grin from within his drop pod. Years of elite training, countless war's and firefight's risking terrible injuries and death but still he loved his job and couldn't imagine himself doing anything else.

The mission debrief was fairly simple, apart from the fact they had been given strange drop coordinates, and now his squad were moments away from being deployed over the dark skies of Downmarket. The thrill of mortal combat was almost upon them. Showpire's grin faded as the countdown to deployment began and he braced himself for the extreme g-force his body was about to endure.

"5â€|" Thoughts of home flashed through his mind.

"4â€|" Images of childhood friends.

"3â€|" Memories of his parents.

"2â€|" Old feelings of girlfriends in easier times.

"1â€|" Showpire recalled himself from his lapse into old times and took a deep breath.

"Drop" The g-force against his body was incredible but he had experienced it many times before and he knew that breathing was the key to staying conscious. The pod cleared Osiris's atmosphere in a burst of heat and light and now the only things he could hear were his team mates breathing hard into their mic's and the rushing of the wind outside his speeding dropped pod. As usual this landing was going to hurt but before the ODST could prep himself for the pain a loud metallic bang sounded somewhere above his head and emergency lights flashed on inside his pod. The squad leader's voice opened above the rush of sounds "Showpire what the hell just happened to your pod?" His drop pod had now begun to spin adding to the g-force drop effect and causing the Private considerable trouble in answering. "Don't know Sir. I think my pod might have malfunctioned. I'm spinning." Every word costing him incredible effort and leaving him breathless.

Private Shamal could just about see the trouble through his tiny window. "Sir. It's Obi. Showpire's pod has lost one of its couplings and one of his breaking rockets has fired. He's drifting of

course."

Corporal Goldwin's voice was etched with worry. "We are still miles above our LZ by the time he lands he could be out of comm range. We...." But the squad leader cut across them all. "That's enough! Showpire you still with us? Showpire?"

The troubled ODST could hear the words of his friends but he couldn't respond. The last thing he saw before he fell into unconsciousness, thanks to excessive g-force, was the laser range finder on his pod went from miles to just a few hundred metres in the blink of an eye.

2. Awakening

Chapter 2:*** Awakening.**

Private Showpire awoke lying on his right hand side, his vision blurred and the taste of blood in his mouth. The screens on his ODST drop pod that weren't shattered were flickering between a life of static and the total darkness of death. His head was pounding as the image before him started to reach focus. His pod was a total wreck. A huge wedge of the drop pod door had been bent out from the bottom left corner. Showpire pulled the emergency door release but the door didn't fly away from the core of the pod. Instead only a slight clinking sound came from the door. He looked again at the bent hole in drop pod. It seemed that the door and the core of his pod had been twisted together by whatever it had hit. With no other options Showpire raised his left leg and began to push away at the jammed door. Inch by inch the door edged further open. Until only the top right hand corner was still firmly attached. With just enough space the ODST slipped his weapons out before squashing himself out into the cool night air. The private stood slowly and collected his firearms. An M7S ODST silenced SMG and an Auto Mag side arm with armour piecing rounds. The side arm also carried the advantageous smart-link to his helmet so he could see through the pistols built in scope by pressing a small button on the side of the gun. Both seemed in good condition after a quick once over so he stowed them in their holsters and slowly took in his surrounding area.

It was the pitch black of night and he could see a few air vents standing nearby, he had clearly crash landed on a massive rooftop. There was clear open sky above and the two nearby moons shone dimly off in the distance. He walked to the edge of the roof and peered down. Way down. Showpire had landed on a skyscraper roof somewhere in central Downmarket. He clicked his night vision on to help him peer into the darkened city but couldn't see much better from this height. He clicked his vision back to normal and called out to his squad mates. "Private Showpire reporting inâ€| Anyone copyâ€| This is Showpire anyone copy?" But no response came. Not even the usual static. Painfully he raised his right arm to his face to check his location on his wrist computer. But a blank screen awaited him. It must have shorted out when he crash landed. Showpire needed to find a terminal to plug into and boot his computer back up. Then he'd be able to check his location and maybe even contact his team. He ducked back into his drop pod and picked up his leg bag containing his first aid kit and extra ammo. Unfortunately only one grenade had survived the crash without damage but one is better than none so, feeling grateful, he strapped it to his belt and started his decent into the

building.

Every floor he opened the door to check for any hard-line access. But the top floors where all still under construction and none seemed to have any power. About ten floors down the trooper found a basic office. Unfurnished like it had never been used but the hard-lines where already installed and that was all he needed. It took maybe ten seconds to reboot his wrist computer and download the city map with the power supplied directly from the hard-line. The computer sparked to life and the city of Downmarket came alive before his eyes.

The first thing that Showpire spotted was a crossed mic symbol toward the bottom right hand side of the screen meaning his comm's were down and then he saw the date in the very top right. He'd been knocked out for just over twenty four hours. Now a new sense of urgency took hold of him. His squad had dropped into a combat ready enemy and had been without him for twenty four hours and counting. He decided to zoom out of his block wide view of Downmarket to see what else of use he could find. Looking down at the whole city one thing leapt straight out at him. The badge of his unit stood out like a neon sign in the darkness of night time, a waypoint made by one of his squad. This meant that one of his squad mates had logged onto the city central computer via a hard-line at some time since they landed and placed a note for any UNSC military personnel to see.

Nervously he tapped the ODST symbol. A small message popped up on screen. "Two members of 58th Marine core ODST's MIA. Two confirmed KIA. Surviving two under siege at tagged ONI headquarters with the large group of civilians. All together there are nearly two hundred of us. We have been chased down from the moment we landed and now we are pinned down by superior enemy numbers and are running low on ammo. Based on current situation we estimate we can hold for a few more hours but then we will have to try something stupid. If any UNSC forces receive this beacon we need immediate assistance!"

Showpire's eyes flickered to the time of the message and the time now on screen. Eight hours had passed since the message posted. He knew the chances of his friends and the civvies being alive were low but he had to make up for his absence so far. He set a waypoint to the location on his wrist computer so he might get to them by the most direct route and started off down the building.

The skyscraper was punched full of holes thanks to Covenant artillery rounds and almost every floor Showpire checked on his way down was a total wreck. Around the fortieth floor the trooper had to stop his decent as the staircase he was traveling on was missing for three floors below. It looked like a Covenant tank round had landed dead on the outside wall of the stairs and the metal steps had melted from the heat of the giant plasma round. Just enough of the concrete remained for him to drop down one level at a time until the staircase began again. But all the extra time delayed was starting to add up. It had been just been two hours since he awoke on top of this building and he felt the need to eat and drink. Showpire stopped quickly and drank from his hip flask. His legs burnt with the effort of carrying all his gear down so many flights of stairs despite his high level of fitness. In fact the thought crossed his mind that he may live a perfectly happy life from here on out without ever seeing another set of stairs again in his life.

3. Search and destroy

Chapter 3:** Search and destroy.**

With a heavy breath of relief Showpire's foot hit the ground floor. He ran a few paces across the lobby before he remembered that he was in a live combat zone. Automatically he put his SMG into his shoulder and braced it tightly. His gun sights now lining up with everything he looked at as he checked the lobby's corners and scanned the street outside through the glass windows but all seemed quite and clear. The news of his dead squad mates flashed though his mind but his ODST training forced his craving for immediate revenge deep down. If he was to be of use he had to maintain a clam thought pattern when confronted with an enemy not rush in hot headed. Showpire turned the revolving door ahead of him slowly until his head was poking out onto the street. The night sky was now slightly clouded and Showpire decided that the few remaining street lamps and occasional burning fires were enough to see by without his night vision for now. The only movement was dust and rubbish gently moving in the wind. Dead civilians were scattered in every direction along with abandoned vehicles some standing as if in traffic, others burnt out wrecks. In a shady corner of the street the trooper decided to check his computer again. He tapped the screen so the 2D overhead map turned into a 3D version instead to gain a better understanding of his objective. The ONI building was wide in diameter but low, maybe four floors high. It was surrounded on all sides by medium height office blocks. His waypoint was five miles away from his current location each block between himself and his waypoint contained many different buildings, alleyways and small back roads. He made the choice to go straight down for four blocks then cut in a block and weave through service road's until he could get a good view of the ONI building whilst remaining in the shadows.

The ODST re-braced his silenced SMG into his shoulder and stepped out into the street. He knew that if the Covenant were still around then he might have to hide quickly at any moment. Making sure to keep close to buildings, shadowed areas or darting between objects for cover he made the first two blocks without incident. Showpire was shocked to see the state of Downmarket. He'd never been here before but he couldn't imagine it before the Covenant attack. Rubble from half destroyed buildings lay fallen across the street. Dead civilians lay scattered everywhere. It looked like they were the victims of a Covenant surprise attack as the bodies where spread out in every direction. Some humans had even been piled and burnt, possibly some sort of half arsed Covenant clean up. If they had been given some warning then all of the civilians knew where to go. They would have all committed to memory a local shelter or a re-enforced building to hide in and await UNSC forces. There would be little to do but take shelter if the Covenant decided to glass the planet like they did with Reach. Chances are in a city the size of Downmarket that some of the civilians had been run through the 'Planetary Defence Force' program. Ever since Reach the UNSC had made sure every major city on every planet stood a better chance of putting up a fight. With PDF training civilians were taught to handle firearms and explosives. Given a basic understanding of tactics and told of local supplies of armour and weapons. Some had even been trained up to operate huge anti air defences placed in strategic locations around vital cities.

The first signs of human resistance were the bullet holes and shell

casings Showpire spotted along the walls and floors. As he moved down the third block he started to find dead Covenant Grunts amongst the human bodies. At least someone was fighting back! However knowing the Covenant forces the way he did, it would not be a surprise to know that the Grunts had died from their own friendly fire. The little alien Grunts are already well known for their panicking in battle. Most of the time all you had to do was stand up in front of one of them and they would turn tail and run.

One wrecked car in particular looked like it had been used by UNSC forces for cover in a firefight as one side was unmarked but the other was half melted and stuck with spikes. Unexploded needler rounds by the look of it. Empty shell casings rattled under foot as the ODST moved in for a closer look. He scanned the area for any extra ammo left behind but nothing remained. Then he noticed that there were no human corpses at this position. Popping his head above the wrecked car Showpire saw the former Covenant position. A few dark purple metal shields sat on the corner of the street opposite the car. Covenant temporary defence shields. The Covenant must have started laying down roots in Downmarket. Showpire crossed the semi lit street slowly and carefully. Upon reaching the shields he found four dead Grunts surrounded by a pool of alien blood. One standard covenant pistol lay very close to his feet. He picked it up but found it drained of charge. There was a needler on the floor as well but even from a few meters away he could tell that it was broken. It still had a couple of rounds in it but the front end of the weapon was a cracked mess so he decided to leave it. The ODST turned to leave but as he did he caught a glimpse of something. Underneath one of the Grunt bodies lay a small round baseball sized object. He crouched down for closer inspection and found it was a blood covered plasma grenade. Just what he needed to make up for his missing frag. Now he was closer to the floor he noticed something else. UNSC shell casings lay towards the back of the Covenant position. Showpire stood and kicked over the grunt lying on its back right next to him, he found it's back riddled with bullet wounds. If he had to guess he'd say the scene in front of him was the aftermath of a UNSC fix and flank manoeuvre. And judging by the lack of UNSC armour clad bodies in the area it looked like it had been executed perfectly. One maybe two troopers had kept the Covenant busy by firing off a few shots from the car and popping up every now and again. Whilst another had crept into the darkness and around the back of the enemy. Showpire quickly wondered if it was his squad mates who had taken the aliens out but again pushed the thought out of his mind. He'd spent enough time day dreaming already. He had to get to the waypoint!

Brushing off some of the blood he stashed the plasma grenade on his belt and carried on towards his objective. Showpire passed another three buildings crouched in the shadows. Only one building away from the end of the block he saw the remnants of a Covenant Ghost and its splattered rider in the middle of the road. But just short of drawing level with the former vehicle he froze stiff. He dropped to the lowest crouch and made sure every step he took was silent as he quickly crossed the road. He was now only thirty foot directly behind a Covenant Elite trooper. It's back turned to him the alien stood arms crossed looking down the road. He knew by the Elites body language that it wouldn't be alone as it was way too relaxed being in a hostile area. But it was bound to turn round at some point. Showpire had closed the gap to ten feet and he decided to take shelter from the Elites line of sight behind a commercial rubbish bin on his left. His current plan was to wait and listen intently for the

movements of his enemy. After twenty seconds or so he heard the Elite shuffle his feet and his best guess was that the alien had just turned around. Showpire grinned underneath his helmet but made sure not to move an inch. Another few seconds passed and another shuffling of feet. The ODST chanced a glance around the bin to see his enemy looking away again. Now came the first big risk as Showpire moved up to near touching distance of his enemy. He only stopped because if he had gone any further the cover of the building to his left would have ended. Another risk as he popped his head around the corner to see what allowed the Elite to be so relaxed. A piece of Covenant light armour sat twenty odd metres down the road. The hell-jumper knew the vehicle as a Revenant. It would seat two life forms within its reddish purple coloured armour, one driving and the other as passenger. The hover craft also supported a medium power plasma launcher at the back. He knew it as a deadly fast vehicle, difficult to hit even with a lock on rocket. However this hovercraft was grounded with another Elite stuck head first into the plasma core at the rear of the machine. Showpire knew that this vehicle ahead of him was an effective piece of armour as he'd seen it a few times before. The Elite nearest him shuffled his feet and the ODST dropped into the deepest shadow nearby at his side. Very slowly the blue armoured alien began to walk back towards his ally and the immobile craft.

In a split second Showpire knew his plan. He left the shadows and followed the Elite step for step to hide his slight sound. Gently and making sure to make no noise what so ever he slid his SMG around on its shoulder strap until it rested on his back. Only a few feet away from the centre of this small hive of hostile activity he stopped his creeping and let his enemy stray away from him a few feet. From the moment he stopped Showpire reached both hands onto his belt for the two grenades that he possessed. Bringing out his one human made grenade with his right hand and the salvaged alien one with his left, thumbs hovering above both detonators. Private Showpire took one final lung full of cool night air before pressing both fire buttons, as everything happened in the blink of an eye. He rolled the human grenade past his oblivious nearest opponent towards the back end of the downed craft and tossed the now glowing plasma grenade into his nearest enemies back. The rolling human grenade made enough of a scrapping sound on the unlit concrete for the enemy playing at mechanic to look up from within the machine. The first Elite feeling the slightest bump of the plasma grenade turned around to see an ODST running flat out towards him. Only then did it start to feel the burning of the attached grenade through his Covenant armour. As the unprepared alien gave voice to his fear and pain Showpire left the ground at full pace aiming both his feet into the Elites chest. His running drop kick knocked the doomed creature back into the static vehicle where his Covenant ally stood in shock taking in this sudden turn of events. The hell jumper landed hard on his back at the exact time that the first grenade started a fast chain reaction of explosions that knocked the troopers breathe from his body along with most of his senses.

When the ODST regained enough of his senses to scramble back to his feet he saw a brighter world before him. The shattered remains of his two huge enemies and their now flaming craft filled the road for metres around. Showpire gained his feet like a drunk. Stumbling and nearly going head over heels. Once again the senses had been knocked from him. This time it was his own doing and he realised the drop pod crash landing had probably hurt him more than he had first thought.

4. Friends with rocket launchers

Chapter 4:** There's nothing like having your friend turn up with a rocket launcher!**

Having scrambled to the shadows once more Showpire rechecked his surroundings for any sign of incoming enemies. Nothing could be seen or heard so he took a moment to breathe deep and try to rid himself of the massive adrenaline rush he had received from his actions. Breathing and heart rate slightly more settled the trooper rechecked his direction and continued to move towards the ONI HQ where his friends had lastest reported their location.

Showpire approached the ONI building directly from its north with increasing caution. He could hear the sounds of battle way off in the distance. Massive explosions and the faintest sounds of gun fire came at him sporadically. Too far away for it to be the ONI HQ in battle Showpire figured it was the UNSC counter offensive in full flow. Probably heading towards the ODST's location.

Finally the trooper gained a visual on the ONI building but it was surrounded by significant Covenant forces, most notable of all was the Wraith tank facing away from him and pointed towards the HQ. Quickly deducing that the enemy still surrounding the building meant that at least someone was alive inside Showpire set about mentally planning his best course of action. He could see a difficult situation ahead of him. From his location he could see there was a vehicle sized opening at the buildings centre, the type of opening that would lead down into an underground car park and drop off point. The ideal place for a last stand if you blocked off the stairwells and disabled the elevators to that level. It would also explain why there was a stalemate between the two enemies. The alien tank was too big to fit down the underground access and any of the Covenant heading into the building would be bottle necked into an easy kill zone for any human troops inside, provided they had some solid cover to hide behind.

A slight sound caught the ODST's attention somewhere off to his left, unseen beyond the corner of the nearest skyscraper. It sounded a little bit like barking, a sound the experienced trooper quickly recognised as a Jackal's vocalisation. His heart beat faster as he realised he had nowhere to go. To his front lay the small blockade of his allies and going backwards would lead him into the line of sight of his now clearly audible enemies. Thinking and acting quickly, as he was trained to do, he darted across the road so as to be closer to his enemies. A risky move as if any of the troops by the blockade had been facing him or turned around they would have seen him in the open and in all likelihood killed him with little effort. Now he was squatted down as close into the wall as possible as the Jackal and whatever else it was talking to walked just past the edge of the skyscraper. The Jackal appeared first its luminous blue defensive shield attached to its right arm whilst pointing off into the distance with its left, towards the direction Showpire had originally come from. Then a Covenant Grunt wobbled its way forward holding a massive cannon on its shoulder and looking where its leader was pointing. Hoping that luck was with him and that these two aliens were alone the ODST made his choice to conserve his ammo and pulled his combat knife from its sheath located on the left side of his

chest. With a few quiet and powerful strides forward he grasped the Grunt's face from behind with his left hand pulling it into his chest so the shocked alien had no chance to move. Muffled as the creature was it still made a noise when it dropped its giant cannon. The Jackal turned saw the human and opened its mouth to scream a warning but before any noise left the creature Showpire had pushed his knife into the beast's throat just above its armoured chest. Blood shot forward from the wound covering Showpire's hand as it fell to the floor in near silence, its shield already dead, the creature grasped at the hole in its neck trying and failing to stem the flow. The trooper then reversed the hold on his knife and drew it powerfully across the neck of the panicking grunt. Taking a quick glance over both shoulders he knew he had not been seen so he stored his bloodied knife and took a dead alien in each hand and dragged them out of sight.

The trooper returned to the corner quickly and retrieved the dead Grunt's cannon. A Fuel Rod Cannon with five rounds already loaded. A new and dangerous plan formed in his mind. A quick check on his mini map and the ODST had decided what to do.

He knew someone was alive in the ONI HQ underground due to enemy presence and thanks to the ODST message on the city central computer they must by now be very low on ammo. Showpire could see a way into the underground but getting in just wasn't enough. Whilst checking the route his plan would take him the trooper found the remains of a human defence post. Seeing the best of the tragic situation he pushed aside the dead and filled a nearby duffle bag with all the ammo and spare weapons he could carry. A couple of MA5's, the most common human assault rifle, with a few full clips each and two grenades. A spare pistol that took the same calibre ammo as his pistol gave him yet another idea as the ODST started his final preparations to get in and if need be back out again of the underground safe zone. The sounds of the UNSC offensive grew louder and the Covenant started looking towards the sounds of battle more often.

Showpire returned to the corner where he had killed his two enemies and retrieved the fallen Jackal's plasma pistol. Adding it to the duffle bag along with two of the fuel rod cannon's live round's, the bag now weighed quite a bit. He then emptied his own side arm of ammunition and wedged the pistol between a lower wall of the skyscraper and some rubbish. Making sure the view was decent via his helmet linked camera. He made sure that the gun turned CCTV camera was covering the entrance of underground. Final prep done he shouldered the cannon and took aim at the rear end of the Wraith.

Three rapid bright green shots left the cannon and stuck the back of the tank inflicting maximum damage and causing the armoured vehicle to explode in a beautiful pattern of bright blue plasma. Quite a bit faster than he expected two huge Covenant Elites rounded the corner and opened fire. The Elites were followed by a steady stream of subordinates and any of them with clear line of sight on the fleeing human opened fire. Needler rounds curved into the building as the ODST sped around the nearest corner. Showpire braced his submachine gun into his shoulder once more and popped his head back around the corner to see plenty of enemies closing on his position before letting off a few rounds claiming another Grunt towards the back and invoking a scream of rage from the nearest Elite.

The hell jumper then summoned all of his strength and ran the length of the building he was using for cover as fast as possible. The weight of all his equipment slowed him down considerably but the Covenant troops thought they were advancing on a stationary enemy, maybe they even thought he was part of the UNSC advance forces which slowed their progress allowing him more time. Showpire made the corner and turned left heading for the road that ran straight in front of the HQ. His lungs worked hard as he made his final left turn and he could see the entrance to the ONI building, a second of doubt entered his mind as he wondered if this plan was going to work. But then he looked ahead of him and it seemed, for a few moments anyway, that all the Covenant forces had turned in the direction of the first attack. Some were advancing to where the cannons shots had come from. Others had simply turned their backs on the underground passage waiting for other braver comrades to do the dangerous work. The distance closed quickly as Showpire sprinted towards the human strong hold. Close enough now to feel the heat from the burning tank he briefly thought he might enter the HQ without even being seen but as the angle changed two Jackals stood facing the burning tank and caught clear sight of him. The ODST unleashed a whole clip from his silenced machine gun cutting down the nearest of the pair. However the Jackal at the rear had brought his orange shield to his defence as soon as he had seen him and the ODST's deadly rounds dropped harmlessly to the floor after striking it. The Jackal screamed an ear splitting cry bringing all Covenant attention straight back to underground entrance and Showpire barely made the last few feet into the underground. Narrowly being missed by plasma repeater rounds and screaming as he entered the ONI HQ. "Don't shot me! Don't shot me!"

5. Reunion

Chapter 5:** Reunion**

The screams from the Covenant outside were full of impotent rage. Showpire descended to level ground and clicked his night vision to counter the darkness within.

"Showpire? I don't believe it." The squad leader's voice was full of shock as he lowered his fire arm and beckoned the out of breath ODST over to his location.

Showpire tried to sound confidant and cheeky but he was so tired it came out as a plea. "Reportingâ€| for dutyâ€| sir." He removed the full duffle bag from his shoulder and dumped it at his feet. "I thought you mightâ€| need this sir." Showpire slumped into the nearest cover as Master Sergeant Grover checked the mystery bag that had just been delivered and Private Obi emerged from the shadows his weapon still trained on the entrance in case any aliens decided to follow Showpire down.

"Hey brother. I thought you were dead."

Showpire smiled under his helmet before remembering the ODST message posted to the cities computer. His smile faded and he asked the inevitable question. "I'm not. But who is?"

Showpire could tell that Obi grimaced as he hesitated to answer. Grover answered instead as he picked up and shouldered the duffle

bag. "Private Tetson was KIA shortly after the drop and Corporal Goldwin died just a few hundred metres away when the outer defences to this building failed." He walked over to Private Shamal tapped him on the shoulder and in the exact same emotionless tone of voice informed him. "Obi. Ammo."

Obi accepted the ammo gratefully and Grover continued with his short debrief. "Private Pyandao has been MIA since the drop. We found his pod in good condition but he was nowhere to be seen and no radio contact was made before we were forced into this place. Our comm's have been useless ever since. Speaking of radio contactâ€!"

His breath finally calmed down Private Calum Showpire gave the briefest statement possible of his actions since the drop. During which he handed his helmet, camera outside activated as onscreen display, to Obi saying only "Trust me." The ODST's switched helmets and as Showpire continued his explanation Obi laughed a vocalised a soft "Very nice."

"Excellent work trooper!" Squad leader exclaimed without emotion at the end of Showpire's tale and then he shouted out to someone in the darkness. Two civilians jogged out of the dark and stood before the leader at attention. The squad leader gave them the ammo bag and told them to distribute it wisely.

"How many civvies have we got here?"

"Almost two hundred souls. They have taken to the underground of the ONI building for shelter, in case we fail to hold this entrance." The squad leader sounded like he could be describing a gardening program. Given all that he had endured on this drop Showpire had expected some emotion to show, but he also knew that everybody coped with these things in their own way. He disregarded these thoughts and moved on.

"Any of them armed?"

"We have eight armed PDF members. But they are only carrying low level side arms and UNSC assault rifles. I've got four helping to hold this level and a pitiful secondary defence line on the next level down. Until you got here we were down to about forty rounds shared." Showpire had a quick scan of his location and spotted the PDF troops crouched in pairs at the very rear of the complex.

Obi interrupted the silence, his tone was clearly troubled "Sir. Covenant reinforcements have just been dropped in."

"What do we have now Private?"

"Two Covenant drop ships Sir. There's another Wraith just been dropped with a lot of ground troops and their being led by the biggest Elite I've ever seen. It's huge, armoured to the teeth and carrying an energy sword... and it looks like they're preparing to come in."

"Ok Showpire breaks over. Cram this energy bar, put a helmet back on and take position. I'll put the PDF's back at their posts. Obi let us know when the alien scum make their move."

After so much solitary time Showpire felt comforted by being back

with his unit. Obi was cool headed even in the hottest of situations and it didn't hurt that he was a superb shot. Everyone back on The Lady Justice would talk about how and why he was still a private. The most popular theory going is that high command had been holding him down at private for more ground experience before a big bump up the ranks. The Sergeant was the most experienced ODST Showpire had ever heard of, let alone met. He had led more than fifty known drops and it was rumoured that he served on Reach before its fall. But he always refused to talk about missions unless you had been there. Showpire briefly wondered at the fate of the missing member of the team. Private Li Pyandao had been assigned to the 677th only weeks before and he was notoriously quiet amongst his peers. He ran the training missions with the rest of the squad and disappeared from all forms of interaction afterwards. He tried to think of any normal conversation he had with Li but nothing came to mind. Then Showpire's reminiscing came to an abrupt halt when he remembered the imminent incursion.

6. The last stand ends

Chapter 6:** The last stand ends**

The Master Sergeant's voice commanded authority as he spoke "Obi. You still got those fuel rod cannon rounds Showpire brought in?"

"Yes Sir."

"Set them both on the left hand side of the entrance. Showpire I want you to hold up on the left hand side when the shooting starts and wait for my word. Obi and I will make all the noise and get their attention over here on the right and when I give the word pop up and hit the fuel rod ammo. You got that?"

"Aye Sir." Showpire liked the plan, simple though it might be. In fact he liked any plan where there was an explosion as a result.

Obi returned to his post having placed the shells in a good position. The squad leader was giving some orders to the PDF troops in the rear concerning covering fire and fall back patterns if his ODST's fell and Showpire was doing a last check on his weapons when Obi shouted out. "Incoming! Jackal's and Grunt's leading with Elite's at the back pushing them all forward."

Showpire shouted out whilst Grover jogged back to his position near the front. "Numbers Obi?"

"About twenty all together. Most are shorty's but there are four regular looking Elite's and the big one."

Grover reminded Showpire to wait for his say so before hitting the explosives and all the ODST's braced for combat as the first enemies appeared running down the ramp.

The ODST's standard weapon being silenced the squad leader had clearly switched weapons with one of the PDF troops as he opened the firefight with a half clip of standard assault rifle dropping multiple enemies and alerting the Covenant to both his and Obi's position. After the initial shock the Jackal's took to the front to provide cover for the Grunts and a steady return fire started up from

the small aliens. So far all the fire had been to and from the metal anti vehicle ramp the two ODST's were using as cover which gave Showpire a superb angle to shoot at his unaware enemies but he had to wait for his time and he knew he wouldn't be waiting long as the Elite's emerged into the underground. Showpire kept watch on them as one of his friends emptied a few rounds at the towering enemy but most of the shots bounced off their armour without effect. One bullet struck the huge Elite clad in gold armour, it stood two clear foot above the others and even without an ornamental headdress it barely fit under the vehicle entrance roof. Showpire frowned as he saw an energy shield take the impact. Shielded enemies were always tough to kill.

Three of the Elites moved swiftly as the gold beast pointed orders for them to flank. Showpire wasn't waiting long until the Grover gave the go ahead with a hand gesture. Showpire burst up from his covered position and loosed two small bursts from his sub machine gun with incredible accuracy into the partially obscured explosive rounds.

The explosion was incredible confined within the underground structure as all the ODST's retreated behind their cover as parts of aliens and debris flew in all directions. Showpire was the first one back up as he scanned the now flattened area. He saw the three Elite's attempting to flank and several of the closest smaller aliens had all been killed in the powerful blast. Then he spotted the gold armoured behemoth knocked down near the bottom of the ramp and for a moment he thought it was dead but a split second later he saw it stand up and roar as loud as it could. Encouraging its remaining troops back to their feet and using its energy sword as a pointer it seemed to be ordering a retreat as he waved his arms and shouted in his alien tongue for his troops to follow him back up the ramp.

The ODST's opened up with everything they had on the fleeing aliens. Showing no mercy after what they had inflicted on Downmarket, and the rest of humanity. They claimed some smaller kills as some of the Grunts fell but the remaining two Elite's were back up the ramp and out of sight too quickly to take any major damage. Showpire darted over to his brothers as the last of the aliens went up the ramp and disappeared.

"Obi what do you see out there?"

"Lots! There are vehicles and ground troops flooding past heading west and the gold Elite has just hoped on a drop ship and bailed."

Showpire voiced his concerns about what had just happened. "You weren't wrong about the big Elite Obi. It must have been pushing 9 feet tall. Biggest I've ever seen by far."

"I told you. And doesn't gold armour mean General or Field Marshal or something?"

The squad leader interrupted. "It's General, now quiet down a moment. Can you hear that?"

Silence fell for a few moments whilst Showpire thought about running into the General for Covenant ground forces on Osiris and regret filled him that they had not killed the foul creature responsible for

all the innocents killed since the invasion started not to mention his squad mates. But his day dreams of vengeance stopped when he heard the distinctive roar of human engines from outside.

Master Sergeant was the first to recognise and make the call. "Brace! Everybody brace!"

The ODST's and the PDF troops all slammed themselves tightly into their nearest cover as series of massive explosions rocked the ONI HQ. The blasts sent waves of flames shooting down the entrance tunnel and shook a light dust from the ceiling above.

Feeling thankful that the bombs hadn't hit the building directly Showpire raised his head and was looking to Obi for answers when he was forestalled. "Sorry mate but the cameras dead."

Showpire voiced his curiosity as he switched helmets with Obi once more. "Sir permission to recon outside and find out what just happened?"

"Negative Private. We need all hands down here in case of a second incursion. We can however try and make radio contact with the UNSC from nearer the entrance."

Grover then retrieved an old school portable radio from the PDF boys and gave it to Showpire and sent him forward to attempt contact. He clicked the radio and made all the correct call signs but received nothing but static. Just about to give in and turn around Showpire heard a heart lifting sound. The kind of sound that brought fire to the darkest places.

He shouted over his shoulder as loud as he could manage.
"Scorpion!"

Grover and Obi came running forward whilst the PDF took the forward cover position just in case. The sound of heavy tracks rolling got louder by the second and Grover ordered the ODST's to follow him out. They all ran up the ramp to find the most common heavy armour in the UNSC facing straight at them in the early light of Downmarket dawn. Not too far behind they could also see a couple of warthogs slowly pushing the remains of Covenant tanks off the main road. Master Sergeant Grover opened his comm's and the scorpion's driver hatch opened to reveal a young Lieutenant with a broad smiling face. "Nice to see someone survived. I shouldn't be surprised to see it's the ODST's. Are you alone?"

Master Sergeant Grover removed his helmet as he gave his answer. "No Sir. Some PDF's helped us hold the building and we have almost two hundred civvies in the lower levels."

"Well done troopers. You can stand at ease for now. Our boys will secure the area and then we can move the civvies out safely."

Grover responded with his emotionless deep tone. "Sorry Sir, but we haven't finished yet. One of my ODST's is still MIA. If you resupply us we need to head back out into the field?"

The young officer looked slightly taken aback. "Ok I'll make you a deal Master Sergeant. You and your men take one of these Warthogs and drop in at our forward operating base. Grab your ammo and a hot meal

and you can get back to it. Deal?"

"Deal. Thank you Sir." The ODST's made their salutes and proceeded to commandeer the nearest Warthog, complete with mounted Gauss cannon. They drove in silence past the advancing units of the UNSC until the Master Sergeant pulled up outside an ammo stash in front of the forward operating base. They filled their pockets and holsters with everything they could carry and Showpire took the time to find a hand held radio and headset to replace his dead mic. As soon as he returned the Master Sergeant spoke. "I hope you enjoyed that hot meal guy's. Time to get back to it and find Private Li Pyandao don't you think?"

"Aye Sir." They both repeated glad to skip the waste of time a hot meal would cost whilst one of their own was still out there somewhere.

With Grover concentrating on driving and Obi on the cannon Showpire took the passenger seat and tuned his new radio to the ODST frequency as they wove in between all the UNSC ground forces. As they reached an open stretch of road Grover announced out of nowhere. "Showpire you've just been field promoted to Specialist in the field of demo. Congratulations."

Obi leaned forward and slapped him on the shoulder pad and Grover carried on looking forward as if nothing had been said at all. Specialist Showpire sat stunned for a few seconds then spoke in his most serious tone. "Thank you Sir! I won't let you down!"

Epilogue;** Back at it.**

Resupplied and ready the brave ODST's head back into the field their mission priorities slightly changed from the original drop.

Search for the mysterious Private Li Pyandao.

Help any remaining civvies.

Take any opportunity to hurt any the Covenant still in Downmarket.

Take enemy intel.

I hope you enjoyed this tale of ODST's in action. Maybe one day far off in the future we will revisit the 677th Marines from The Lady Justice together. Until then thanks for reading.

End
file.